



*eNews from Sen. Lisa Murkowski - Vol. 3, Issue 7: : [Visit Senator Murkowski's Web Site](#)
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Immigration Bill Stalls in Senate

Last night the Senate rejected a call by Majority Leader Harry Reid to move forward on a final vote on the Immigration Bill. My colleagues in the Minority had demanded an opportunity to reshape the bill and wanted to offer additional amendments. By forcing a vote on cloture, the Majority Leader wanted to end the debate without allowing any additional amendments. The cloture motion failed by a vote of 45-50; I voted against moving the bill forward.

I am hopeful that we will have another opportunity to thoroughly debate this issue later this year. Our current immigration policy is broken. In the last Congress we made strides in increasing security along our borders, but we all recognize that we still have more work to do.

Senator Murkowski Sponsors Geothermal Energy Bill

I joined a bipartisan group of Senators in sponsoring a bill to advance geothermal energy development. The National Geothermal Initiative Act of 2007 sets a national goal that America achieve 20 percent of its total electrical output from geothermal resources by 2030, sets an annual growth rate in the use of geothermal power and provides for research and development of geothermal resources.

When we look at the potential for geothermal power, it only makes sense that we improve the technology and reduce the cost of tapping earth's inexhaustible heat supplies to fuel electricity. Geothermal power offers the possibility of relatively inexpensive, domestic power without any carbon emissions. Chena Hot Springs successful use of geothermal energy demonstrates the potential for other Alaskan communities to also develop their geothermal resources.



Senator Murkowski with Bernie Karl at the nation's first low-temperature geothermal renewable electrical project at Chena Hot Springs, outside Fairbanks.

Senator Murkowski Applauds Exxon Ruling

I am pleased with the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals decision to reject Exxon Mobil Corp.'s latest appeal in the oil spill case and order for Exxon to pay \$2.5 billion in punitive damages.

Senator Ted Stevens and I introduced tax legislation to give the plaintiffs in the Exxon Valdez oil spill settlement the ability to increase retirement contributions and to provide tax relief through income averaging.

The bill would provide tax relief to all of the individual plaintiffs in the oil spill settlement, 80% of whom are commercial fisherman. It was drafted to cover any possible settlement while the case is in litigation and any amounts received under the judgment if it is upheld. This bill provides financial relief to those impacted by the spill when it comes to contributions to retirement plans and averaging of income for tax purposes. It is imperative that we address this important issue to help our fishermen plan for their retirement needs. The bill includes the following provisions:

Contributions to Retirement Plans

- Increases the caps on deductions and income for traditional IRAs to the extent of the income the individual receives from the settlement or judgment.
- Allows contributions to Roth IRAs to the extent of the income from the settlement or judgment.
- Allows contributions to any other type of qualified retirement plan [e.g., SEPs, 401(k)/Profit Sharing Plans, etc] to the extent of the income received from the settlement or judgment.

New Passport Regulations

The U.S. Departments of State and Homeland Security announced that U.S. Citizens traveling to Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and Bermuda who have applied for but not yet received passports can nevertheless temporarily enter and depart from the United States by air with a government issued photo identification and Department of State official proof of application for a passport through Sept. 30, 2007. The federal government is making this accommodation for air travel due to longer than expected processing times for passport applications in the face of record-breaking demand.

Adults who have applied for but not yet received a passport should present government-issued photo identification and an official proof of application from the U.S. Department of State. Children under the age of 16 traveling with their parents or legal guardian will be permitted to travel with the child's proof of application. Travelers who have not applied for a passport should not expect to be accommodated. U.S. Citizens with pending passport applications can obtain proof of application at [the following website](#).

Condolences on the Passing of Senator Craig Thomas

The United States Congress recently lost one of its most distinguished public servants, Senator Craig Thomas. I had the honor to serve with him on the Indian Affairs Committee, where his dedicated advocacy on behalf of Native American communities was unmatched. I also had the privilege to serve alongside Senator Thomas on the Energy Committee and was deeply impressed by his commitment to craft our successful Energy Policy Act. He served as an inspiration to us all. During this time of loss, our thoughts and prayers are with Senator Thomas' family.



Senator Craig Thomas (R-WY) was first elected to the United States Senate in 1994, and was subsequently reelected to two terms.

Senator Murkowski Supports the Alaska Railroad

I introduced legislation that would authorize the Administrator of General Services to convey a parcel of land in Ship Creek to the Alaska Railroad Corporation. Similar legislation sponsored by Congressman Don Young passed the House of Representatives on May 15. This parcel of land is a key transportation component for the redevelopment of Ship Creek. This bill is highly beneficial to both the Alaska Railroad Corporation and the General Services Administration. It provides the railroad with land crucial for making improvements in the area, while at the same time freeing the GSA to move their fleet center to a more convenient location.

The piece of property in question was originally owned by the Alaska Railroad Corporation and leased to the GSA during a period of federal ownership. GSA acquired the property when the Alaska Railroad Corporation transferred to state ownership. As consideration for the property, the

Alaska Railroad Corporation will either convey a replacement facility to the GSA or pay the fair market value of the property based on the highest and best use as determined by an independent appraisal commissioned by the Administrator and paid for by the Alaska Railroad Corporation. The GSA supports this legislation to expedite their move from the present location to one that will allow them to better serve the military bases.

Murkowski Speaks to the National Network to End Domestic Violence

Alaska faces some of the harshest domestic violence statistics in America. Recent data shows that from 1999-2004, there were more than 18,000 domestic violence related charges in a state with just over 600,000 people – that is roughly one incident per 33 residents in only five years. According to information from the Uniform Crime Reports, Alaska has ranked in the top 5 states in the number of rapes per capita each year since 1976 – and Alaska ranks first in the nation for the highest per-capita rate of forcible rape.

The Violence Against Women Act, which I co-sponsored, was reauthorized last year and has helped to address some of the critical challenges facing Alaska. Notably, this legislation has provided far reaching guidelines and resources to better assist tribal communities in decreasing the incidents of violent crimes against native women – The strengthened Violence Against Women Act is a true testament to our dedication to one unifying goal -- to end domestic and sexual violence. But it is only the start.

The recent Amnesty International report on sexual abuse and domestic violence in Indian Country reminds us in Washington how limited our ability is to make things safer for victims on the ground. In Congress we think globally about the resources that first responders and advocates need to protect victims and prosecute offenders. But the resources we provide globally need to empower actions at the local level.



Senator Murkowski listens to concerns of a National Network to End Domestic Violence member.

Senator Murkowski Addresses the International Whaling Commission

I had the opportunity to address members of the IWC while they were in Anchorage for their convention. Since their formation, the IWC has recognized that subsistence whaling is of a different nature than commercial whaling and have managed this activity with different goals. I

believe that most Americans share my support for the principles of the Convention and the work of the IWC, and have a sincere appreciation of their success in regulating harvest and conserving whales.



Senator Murkowski meets with Seng Keng Moua of Anchorage. Seng Keng was in Washington, D.C. participating in the ArtLine 2006 Cultural Exchange. His painting is part of an exhibit being showcased in Union Station.



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